



Highlights



The newsletter for Idaho NRCS employees and conservation partners.

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Special Feature

Senator Mike Crapo Speaks at CSP Event

Idaho's U.S. Senator Mike Crapo spoke in support of the Conservation Security Program (CSP) at an NRCS event on Aug. 3 in Salmon.



Senator Mike Crapo speaks to ranchers in Salmon.

Steve Herbst and his family of the **Nelson Angus Ranch** hosted the event (complete with home-made cinnamon rolls). Local ranchers, and conservation district and NRCS staff attended.

"I'd like to extend a great big thank you to all the private property owners," Crapo said. "Idaho leads the nation in conservation and stewardship."

Crapo, who serves as chairman of the Senate Agriculture Subcommittee on Forestry, Conservation and Rural Revitalization, touted EQIP and CSP as important programs for accomplishing conservation now and in the future.

He said, in a time of tight budget constraints, he still foresees the funding

for conservation programs in the 2007 Farm Bill to remain about the same.

"I think we'll keep CSP and all the other conservation programs," he said. "The question will be the allocation of resources among them."

Crapo also gave **Jody Fagan**, public affairs specialist, an on-camera interview for a Farm Bill success stories video she will complete this fall.

Later, **Steve Herbst** and **Barry Albert**, Salmon district conservationist, showed Fagan and a local videographer Herbst's ranch improvements including sediment ponds, sprinkler irrigation systems and wildlife habitat enhancements.



(Above) Videographer John Young mikes up Barry Albert for an interview.



(Left) The Herbst family in front of the Nelson Angus Ranch sign.

highlight \hi-lit\ n. 1: the lightest spot or area. v. 2: to throw a strong light on, to emphasize.

Quotable Quotes

"Success is loving life and *daring* to live it."

-Maya Angelou

Suggestions for Success:

- 1.) Marry the right person. This one decision will determine 90 percent of your happiness or misery.
- 2.) Work at something you enjoy and that is worthy of your time and talent.
- 3.) Give people more than they expect and do it cheerfully.
- 4.) Discipline yourself to save money on even the most modest salary.
- 5.) Commit yourself to constant improvement.
- 6.) Be bold and courageous. When you look back on your life, you'll regret the things you didn't do more than the ones you did.
- 7.) Take good care of those you love.

-H. Jackson Brown Jr.



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NRCS Helps Veteran Create Wetlands Wonder

Excerpted from the *Coeur d'Alene Press*, Aug. 3, 2005

As **Ray Laboure** meanders down his driveway from his Hauser Lake home in his ATV, he can't resist pulling over.

"It's a beautiful lake, but it's dying underneath," he says.

But Laboure is doing more than his part to keep it alive.

Laboure, a disabled veteran, has donated 27 acres of his property for a wetlands project with the [NRCS].

"My dream is to allow kids and church groups to see our ecosystem the way it used to be," he says.

Considering land values in North Idaho, Laboure is giving back a lot.

Under an agreement between him and NRCS, the valley can never be taken out of wetlands.

Excavation work of removing 98,400 cubic yards of dirt for the ponds has started. The ponds will range from three to five feet deep.

Plantings of about \$20,000 worth of trees could start as early as this fall. The project could take several years to complete.

"It will be a beautiful site once it's finished," says **Kim Ann Erk**, the NRCS civil engineering technician who designed the project.

Erk says some residents were concerned about the project, but when they learned how WRP would benefit the lake and encourage wildlife habitat they perked up.

"Ray has really tried to make sure this is a good project for the community," Erk says.



NRCS CET Kim Erk visits with Ray Laboure about his WRP project near Hauser.

EQIP Enhances Habitat for Serial Conservationist

By Sarah Bigger
Public Affairs, North Idaho

Ed Schneider is a serial conservationist.

Since purchasing property south of Coeur d'Alene for hunting in 1989, he has participated in at least six state and federal conservation programs including EQIP and CRP.

"I never thought I'd be into agriculture so much," Schneider says.

Most recently, he worked with **Mark Addy**, Coeur d'Alene district conservationist, on a four-acre reforestation project converting marginally productive hay into trees.

"I could never figure out why [it wouldn't produce]," he says. "I finally decided it was telling me it wanted to grow trees."

Schneider planted the area

mostly with Ponderosa pine seedlings. He is now trying to protect his seedlings from the deer and fighting noxious weeds. He and his wife diligently spot spray and don a hipbag and clippers while on the property.

"The best investment I've made is a back-pack sprayer," he says.

Either way, Schneider's hard work is showing results with the new spotted fawns lying within the trees' shade, and the constant music of dozens of songbirds.



Ed Schneider on a rainy day in Coeur d'Alene.

Producers Using OnePlan

Over 150 of Idaho's farmers and ranchers have used the new OnePlan software to do a conservation plan.

Also, several NRCS offices are using the software for their new conservation plans.

Keith Griswold, Cascade district conservationist, worked with CSP-eligible producers through OnePlan to document their current conservation practices and future enhancements.

The OnePlan software, created by the Idaho Soil Conservation Commission, Idaho Association of Conservation Districts, NRCS and a host of other partners, offers producers a one-stop shop for their conservation planning needs.

Producers who use OnePlan can provide NRCS and conservation district personnel the information needed to begin RMS planning through ToolKit.

Besides the overall Conservation Planner and the Nutrient Management Planner modules, Idaho is also constructing a Range and a Pest Management Planner.

Idaho is now sharing the OnePlan programming scripts with Vermont, Oregon, Iowa and several others.

For more information, contact **Wayne Newbill**, OnePlan coordinator, at 338-4321 or visit www.oneplan.org. Staff can create their own login and check out the resources OnePlan offers.



Wayne Newbill, a former farmer and Ada SWCD board member, now coordinates OnePlan.



Minidoka Conservation District Celebrates Final Well Closing

by **Kristen Clayton**
Public Affairs, Idaho Falls

Water in the Snake River aquifer is a lot cleaner now thanks to a massive project wrapping up this summer.

The more than \$4 million A&B Irrigation Project closes 79 injection, or drain wells, near Rupert.

"We're pleased to have 87 producers participating to convert more than 10,000 acres from gravity irrigation to sprinklers," says **Jim McCall**, Minidoka SWCD supervisor.

It is reason to celebrate for the SWCD, who spearheaded the project. A bus tour and celebration held in July took 50 participants to view the work done.

Money specifically set aside by Congress for this project allowed A&B Irrigation to seal off the wells. Money administered through NRCS assisted the landowners to convert from flood irrigation to sprinkler.

Julie Thomas, Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) coordinator in Twin Falls, wrote the grant. **Congressman**

Mike Simpson helped get the major earmark approved.

The celebration of the well closures also marked the Minidoka



Adolfo Perez, NRCS acting state conservationist, and **Patrick Evans**, Rupert district conservationist, discuss the project.

SWCD's 50th anniversary. Area landowner **Harold Cavener** appreciates the help.

"It's doubtful we could have done this work without the cost-share," he says.

The icing on the cake is the 10 percent or more Cavener claims he's

saving on his water usage.

After the bus tour, a dutch oven picnic and awards celebration was held. SWCD supervisors past and present were in attendance. NRCS employees **Julie Thomas** and **Terry Edwards**, and SWCD employee **Dan Strickler** were honored for their work in getting the project done.



Julie Thomas, Mid-Snake RC&D coordinator, **Terry Edwards**, Gooding soil conservationist, and **Dan Strickler**, with the Minidoka SWCD, were recognized for their work on the project.

Genesee Farmer Takes Direct Seed Risk with EQIP Help

by **Jodi Walker**
Public Affairs, Orofino

Eric Odberg admits when he started direct seeding his canyon-rim ground he didn't really know what he was doing.

With EQIP and the knowledge of a neighbor, Odberg has transitioned to direct seeding and has seen the quality of his ground increase.

He hasn't done specific soil quality tests, he says, but worms are plentiful and yields are as high, if not higher, than they were before the change seven years ago.

Odberg, 35, is a fourth-generation farmer on the family's ground south of Genesee.

Odberg was eyeing the work of neighbor Russ Zenner when he

tiptoed into direct seeding with a 90-acre piece on the canyon edge.

"It was my best ground," he says.

The maiden voyage seemed less risky, he says, with the assistance of EQIP. After three years, he boosted his enrollment to 400 acres.

The extra income also allowed him to invest in a low-disturbance disk opener drill. This replaced the two-pass system he was using.

Odberg says one of the biggest challenges he faces is 45-percent slopes. About 10 percent of the farm's 2,150 acres are that steep, but the entire acreage is rolling hills at best.

"I've been pleased with the hillside stability," he says of the drill.

Yields dropped slightly when he started direct seeding but they have since gone back up. He has also seen

the wet spots dry up.

"I feel I can get out on the ground as early as conventional guys."

Odberg is involved in the Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Association and the Clearwater Direct Seeders, which are both made up of growers

and industry people working together to promote direct seeding.



Direct-seed farmer Eric Odberg.



Snapshots from the Field



(Left) Paul Gravelle, winner of the 2005 Latah SWCD Stewardship Award, inspects a weed on his property as several tour participants look on.



Scott Henderson (right), Emmett district conservationist, contemplates his future stardom in an upcoming NRCS video as Ron Anderson, USDA videographer, checks camera location.

Nathan Matlack, Salmon range specialist, and David Schmidt, Pocatello area conservationist, enjoy a field tour of the Nelson Angus Ranch outside of Salmon.



(Below) Kudos to engineers: a new fish screen designed by Dale Gooby, engineer in Salmon.

Personnel Actions - April to June 2005

CAREER CONDITIONAL

Chad D Gipson – Electronics Technician – SO Snow Survey, 5/18/05
Nathan K Matlack – Convert to Career Cond. Appt, Rangeland Mgmt Spec. – Salmon FO, 5/22/05
Janet C Bryant – Soil Scientist – SO Soils Staff, 5/15/05
Jody A Hogan – Admin. Office Asst. – Pocatello FO, effective 5/15/05
Olen S Milholland – Hydrologic Tech. – SO Snow Survey, 5/15/05
Thomas Nadgwick – Soil Con. Tech. – Rupert FO, 5/15/05
Thomas M Newnham – Soil Con. Tech. – Shoshone FO, 6/12/05

EXCEPTED APPOINTMENT

Mary Bodley – Soil Con. – Orofino FO, 5/01/05
Brandon J Pankau – Bio. Science Aid – Aberdeen PMC, 5/31/05
Lyndsey R Girod – Student Trainee Soil Con. – Coeur d'Alene, 6/26/05
Lamar R Broncho – Student Trainee Soil Con. Aid – Blackfoot, 6/05/05

D Shane Newbill – Student Trainee Soil Con. – Caldwell FO, 5/31/05

PROMOTIONS

Janice K Tuma – Soil Con. Tech. – Caldwell FO, 4/03/05
Arnold B Wetzstein – Civil Engineer – Twin Falls FO, 4/03/05
Barbara E Albiston – Career Ladder, Staff Asst - SO Tech. Services, 5/15/05
Roberta S Graham – Career Ladder, Soil Con. Tech. – Moscow FO, 5/15/05
Rhoda Suderman – Temp. Promo., Office Auto. Asst. to Secretary – SO, 4/17/05
Ryan S Clayton – Career Ladder Soil Con. Tech. – Idaho Falls, 5/29/05
Kathy J Elliot – Career Ladder Soil Con. Tech. – Lewiston, 5/29/05
Katie L Oliphant – Career Ladder Soil Con. Tech. – Driggs FO, 5/29/05
David W Schmidt – Area Con. – South Dakota to Pocatello, 5/29/05
Bruce D Knapp – Soil Scientist – Michigan to Moscow, 6/12/05

Treg Owings – District Con. – Washington to Lewiston, 6/12/05
Jessica L Helsley – Career Ladder Student Trainee Soil Con. – Moscow FO, 6/26/05
Blake E Tubbs – Career Ladder, Soil Con. – Payette FO, 6/12/05

REASSIGNMENT

Robert D Fredericksen – Soil Con., Lewiston to SO, 4/03/05
Mark R Weatherstone – Asst. State Con. – Tech. Services, Palmer AK to SO, 5/29/05
Donald R Tibbets – Student Trainee Civil Engineer – Twin Falls to Meridian FO, 5/23/05
Ami Jungert – Soil Con. – Gooding to Emmett FO, 4/17/05
Barry A Nord – Area Range Con. – Nevada to Caldwell FO, 6/12/05

SEPARATIONS

Kayla E Schwenkfelder – Student Trainee Civil Engineer, Salmon FO, 5/04/05